

Pulling Together by TheByerssister

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Characters: Billy Hargrove, Jonathan Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Original Female Character(s), Original Male Character(s), Steve Harrington

Relationships: Jonathan Byers/Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler/Original Female Character(s), Nancy Wheeler/Original Male Character(s)

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Summary:

When Nancy Wheeler's new friends turn out to be trouble, it's up to Steve Harrington, Jonathan Byers, and even Billy Hargrove, to pull together and help her out.

Pulling Together

Author's Note:

Obviously I don't own Stranger Things. Please enjoy and let me know what you think in the comments :)

It all started with the paired partner programme at Hawkins High. A school run system that paired A+ kids with low achieving students in the hopes that it would lift their grades. Of course Nancy Wheeler had been selected to participate, she was one of the smartest girls in the junior class; maybe even the whole school. And so twice a week, for an hour, she sat in the library and tried to help her partner study, which would be easier if her partner always turned up. Debbie had a bad habit of turning up half an hour late, or not showing up at all. And whilst Nancy was determined to make the tutoring work, enough was enough.

She stood up when she saw Debbie striding through the library doors, her bag slung over her shoulder as she collected her things. 'Hey! Wheeler!' Debbie called, jogging to meet the table 'where you going? We still got another half hour.'

Nancy frowned, her eyebrows drawing together in frustration 'I've got a chemistry test to study for, I can't just sit here and do nothing.' There was an awkward pause and she stood there silently, playing with the strap of her bag and building up the courage to say what she needed to say. 'I think maybe you should ask for a different partner.'

Debbie looked confused her hands folded across her chest as she studied her mentor with critical eyes. 'Is this because I was late? Because it's not my fault, I had stuff to do.'

'You always have stuff to do.' Nancy sighed 'I just don't think I can help if you're not here.' She smiled a soft, awkward smile and turned to leave, but a firm hand on her arm made her stop and turn.

Debbie's eyes looked almost pleading and Nancy was surprised by the sincerity in her voice when she spoke. 'Please Wheeler...Nancy. You're the best tutor I've had. I got an A on my history paper for the first

time in like...well ever. My dad's happy and nobody's yelling at me, I want it to stay that way.'

There was a moment of silence, Debbie's fingers still firm around Nancy's forearm as if she was worried that the other girl would run. But Nancy was still, her eyes staring at the ground in contemplation, her bottom lip caught between her teeth as she went over her choices in her head. Finally, after what had felt like an eternity of silence to Debbie, she sighed. 'Fine, but you have to be on time next week!'

Debbie was nodding before Nancy had even finished speaking 'yeah, yeah of course.' She used her grip on Nancy's wrist to pull her into a hug 'you're the best, know that?' Nancy blushed, straightening her jacket and fiddling awkwardly with the strap of her bag as a pale blush crept over her cheeks. 'I'm serious' Debbie said with a grin 'you're saving my life here!' There was a brief pause and Debbie seemed thoughtful. 'Why don't you come out with me tonight? My friend's having a party, it's gonna be really fun.'

Nancy caught her lip between her teeth again and bit down as she thought. She didn't really know Debbie all that well but she'd seem some of her friends and she knew that they liked to party. Maybe it would be good for her though, she hasn't been getting out much after she broke up with Steve and she couldn't exactly just sit around waiting for Jonathan to pluck up the courage to ask her. 'Sure, I'll be there.'

Debbie's grin grew even wider, her hands gripping Nancy's shoulders and pulling her in for another hug. 'Awesome! I'll pick you up tonight from your place, just tell your parents that you're staying at mine, yeah?' Nancy nodded, this wasn't exactly her first rodeo. 'Ok great, I'm gonna go tell everyone that I'm bringing a friend tonight!' And with that she was striding away, her long blonde hair bouncing as she walked. 'Have fun with your chemistry' She yelled as she reached the door, not even sparing Nancy a backwards glance as she marched off.

Nancy stood silently in the centre of the library, wondering what she had possibly signed herself up to.

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Jonathan and Steve were already waiting for her when she entered the cafeteria. Some people would find it odd that she sits with her ex-boyfriend at lunch, but it was either she say with Steve and Jonathan or she sat with nobody. She dropped into the seat beside Jonathan and stared at her tray of food; her thoughts about the party later that night making her too anxious to eat.

'You ok, Nance?' Steve asked, sharing a quick concerned glance with Jonathan.

Nancy almost jumped at the break in the silence 'What? Oh, yeah.' She shoved at her potatoes with her fork and sighed. 'Just nervous I guess, I'm going to a party tonight and I don't really know anybody.' She shrugged 'I'm sure it'll be fine.'

Steve frowned 'who's party?' There was confusion and concern in his voice, Nancy only ever went to parties with him or Jonathan, where could she be going all of a sudden with people that she didn't know?

'I don't know, it's Debbie's friend, she invited me.'

Steve's frown deepened 'Nancy, I know Debbie, she hangs around with a bad crowd. Hell, even Hargrove has better friends!'

Jonathan looked concerned at Steve's words, he didn't know much about the people at school but if Steve said that these guys were worse than Billy Hargrove....well that said something. 'Maybe you should give it a miss, Nancy. We could all do something tonight instead? My mom just rented a bunch of movies, we could have a movie night.'

Steve nodded in agreement but Nancy huffed, dropping her fork into her food and pushing herself away from the table with an awful squeak of chair legs against the cafeteria floor. 'Maybe I want to hang out with Debbie!' She snapped 'maybe I thought it would be nice to hang out with someone other than my ex-boyfriend and the guy who never wants to ask me out! So thank you, but I can make my own decisions.'

And with that she was gone, striding away without a second thought. She knew that Jonathan would be blushing and she did feel a little

bit bad about that. It wasn't fair to talk to them like that and she knew it. But she was so tired of doing nothing all day, she missed having fun and who were they to tell her that she couldn't go?

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Dinner time in the Wheeler household was as quiet as usual, the only sounds coming from Karen as she fed Holly her dinner. Nancy knew she had to speak up and ask her mom about tonight, but for some reason she was nervous. What if her parents said no? What would Debbie think? She swallowed her mouthful of chicken and stared at the chunk sitting on her fork, contemplating putting it in her mouth but knowing that she needed to get it over with and ask already.

'I said I'd stay at Debbie's house tonight if that's ok? She missed our study session and she has a big test tomorrow so she needs my help.'

Karen frowned 'Why did she miss your session?'

Nancy's mind went blank for a moment and she curses internally. 'Uhh...She had a dentist appointment, had to leave school and everything.'

There was a moment of silence and Nancy desperately hoped that it worked. Karen seemed thoughtful for a second or too before nodding slightly 'Ok, but just for tonight. I want you in school on time tomorrow and then home straight after.'

Nancy nodded, a small smile blossoming on her face. 'Thanks mom.'

She jumped to her feet and jogged upstairs to her room, rustling through her wardrobe in the hopes that she'd find something suitable. Debbie always dressed super trendy and Nancy needed to follow suit if she wanted to be accepted. She stared at the clothes for a minute, unsure what would work, until finally deciding on her trusty denim jeans and soft blue sweater. It might not have been the trendiest thing in her wardrobe, but it was comfortable and still stylish.

Nancy combed her hair, letting it hang in soft waves around her face, before throwing on her denim jacket and sitting by the window, waiting for Debbie's car to pull into the drive. She sat there for what

felt like an eternity, but was in reality only a half hour, before she saw Debbie's car swing into the drive. With a quick check in her bag to make sure she had everything, she jogged down the stairs, telling a quick goodbye to her mom as she vanished through the front door.

Debbie smiled as Nancy climbed into the passenger seat. 'Hey Wheeler, ready to party?' Without waiting for an answer, she pulled out of the drive and they set off. It didn't take them long to hit the main road and Nancy frowned when she saw that they were leaving Hawkins. As the drive further away, everything became unfamiliar and an anxious knot tied itself in Nancy's stomach.

Finally, after a good 45 minutes of driving, Debbie pulled up outside a large house. There were people stumbling about in the garden and music blasting from within. Nancy took one look at the people laughing loudly on the lawn and knew straight away that this wasn't a High School party.

Not for the first time that night, she wondered what she'd gotten herself into.